

Working paper

Generation-Specific Media Practices: Perceptions of the Validity of the BBC WS Turkish News Programme

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1. Introduction

When the BBC World Service founded its Turkish services in November 1939, radio in Turkey had only recently been established. With the first radio station set up in 1927, the total number of receivers throughout Turkey didn't exceed 10.000 in 1936 (cf. Kejanlıoğlu 2005, p. 149). This provided a very opportune starting basis for establishing the BBC's influence on the Turkish news market, all the more important as World War II had only recently begun.

The influence of the BBC World Service is articulate in the interviews conducted for this report. Nonetheless it is limited to those persons who were born in the 1950ies when radio and print press products were the only media sources of information in the country. In contrast, for those among our interviewees who were born when television was popularized in Turkey the meaning of tuning in to the BBC World Service has changed. Growing up in a time of a liberalized flourishing media landscape these people regard the BBC as a one, though a very valuable, among different sources of information.

Interesting enough the BBC's Turkish service has experienced this transformation period not only on the part of its news services but also in its cultural programmes. Prior to the liberalisation of the media market in Turkey in 1993, the Turkish state run television and radio programmes provided its audiences only with a limited range of cultural broadcasting, especially as regards music. E.g. the music tradition of the so-called Arabesque had been forbidden in the state radio and television. Therefore the BBC with its cultural programme, and the Sunday music request programme in particular, enjoyed great popularity among its audiences. However when in the 1990ies private television and radio channels began to broadcast Arabesque music as well, the BBC soon lost its monopoly on such marginalized music and finally cancelled its request programme in 1996.¹ The BBC now had to compete with numerous other regional and national channels within Turkey. The quality of its news broadcasting has since then been only one of its corner stones. With in-depth analyses as well as with longer reportages the BBC tries to make a difference vis-à-vis the sometimes shallow programmes of private channels in Turkey. Today the BBC itself profits from the liberalised media market by transmitting its programme on FM through the Turkish rebroadcaster NTV.

Along with these historical media transformations a significant shift in the media practices of our interviewees could be identified: Whereas the generation born in the "radio days" (to quote the famous movie by Woody Allen) still are inclined to seek what they call 'objective' information and give the BBC much credit in this respect, the generation who have grown up in a digitalised and liberalised media landscape view the BBC's news programme only as one though a valuable perspective in a differentiated and complex range of news sources.

The paper at hand aims at analysing such generational differences in the media practices of the BBC WS Turkish service's audiences on an empirical basis. In-depth interviews with persons from different age-cohorts have been conducted and then analysed with the documentary method, a special methodology of the qualitative research tradition. Along with the empirical analysis a broader theoretical framework for understanding media practice cultures with their generational peculiarities is developed in this paper.

The basic theoretical framework and the qualitative methodology of this empirical research are outlined in chapter 2. Chapter 3 gives an overview on the cases studied in this report. In chapter 4 the older radio generation and their search for 'objective' are analysed. A brief discussion of the theoretical connection between the concepts of media and generation can be

1. This information is based on personal communication with the head of the Turkish service department, Mr Hüseyin Sükan.

found in chapter 5 whereas chapter 6 is devoted to what I here call the “digital” generation. Finally (chapter 7) I will summarize the generational differences identified throughout the paper and give an outlook to those commonalities among interviewees which may refer to aspects of social milieu.

Although all interviewees presented here are male as well as affiliated to middle class milieus, it would be premature to put those aspects of media practices which are peculiar to gender and/or social milieu in the focus of this paper. A second paper still in preparation will then deal with gender-specific facets of media practices in Turkey on the basis of an empirical comparison between male and female audiences.²

Acknowledgements

The working paper at hand, although it has been prepared and is solely accounted for by its author, is based on narrative interviews capably conducted and transcribed by Olcay Nohl. This ongoing research is part of the programme “Tuning In: Diasporic Contact Zones at BBC World Service”, based at the Open University, funded by the AHRC Diasporas, Migration and Identities Research Programme and directed by Prof. Dr Marie Gillespie who has greatly contributed to this paper with her important comments and intriguing questions. The author would like to express his gratitude to Olcay Nohl as well as to Marie Gillespie.

2. Media practices in conjunctive experiential spaces

A comprehensive understanding of media practices needs to differentiate between two levels of action: the level of reflexive, purposeful action on the one hand which is itself rooted in the level of habitualised, pre-reflexive action. Whereas those theories which exclusively deal with reflexive action separate knowledge from action and – as Joas (1992, p. 231) has highlighted with critical distance to such utilitarian action models – postulate that “*first* orientations are found in the process of coming to know the world, which are only *thereafter* pursued in action”,³ in pre-reflexive action motives and action are intermingled. Such non-reflexive, ongoing and routinized action may be called “habit” (Dewey 1980) or “habitual action” (Bohnsack 1997).

The structure of habitual action is not only a prerequisite of a basic continuity of action, but also the basis for the evolution of a fundamental sociality rooted in commonalities of habitual action, or, as Bohnsack (1997) has put it, rooted in “habitual concordance”. Those concordances of media-related habitual action which I aim to reconstruct among the audiences of the BBC World Service Turkish radio point to collective orientations and commonalities of the “stratification of experience” (Mannheim 1952, p. 297). This affiliation to a “conjunctive experiential space” (Mannheim 1982, p. 194) connects individuals who are not necessarily personally acquainted.⁴

2. This second paper will also discuss questions of transnational/intercultural communication between the diasporic producers of the BBC World Service Turkish radio and their audiences in Turkey as well as of cosmopolitanism. Further research will then shift the focus toward institutional aspects of the BBC World Service Turkish edition.

3. For a critique of the utilitarian action model see Bohnsack/Nohl 2003.

4. The concept of “conjunctive experiential space” has to be distinguished from what Anderson (2006) calls “imagined communities”. Although both concepts refer to an entity of people who may not be personally acquainted, members of imagined communities lack any commonalities whereas those persons in a conjunctive experiential space share homologous experiences, though these do not necessarily have to be made together.

Some of those people I have interviewed for this research project share habits of media practice although they do not know each other. Such collective media practices point to commonly shared experiential spaces related to gender, generation, the migratory location of diasporas, or other dimensions of collective experience. Because such collective patterns of media practices are not primarily products and objects of reflection the interviewees may not be able to explicitly state such affiliations or even to explain them. It is a requirement for the empirical analysis to identify those conjunctive experiential spaces in which media practices are based (see below).

As a matter of fact, generational, gender-specific and other experiential spaces intermingle and intersect in everyday life. A person's media practice is not only constituted by his or her gender, but also by (pre-reflexive) experiences related to generation, social class milieu, or the migratory location. Collective overlaps of such experiential spaces may be called "milieus" (Bohnsack 1997) or, as Schäffer (2007) has proposed for media research, "cultures of media practice."

On the level of the individual the multidimensionality of cultures of media practice is reflected in "multilayered identities" (Yousouf 2007, p. 370), or, as I would like to put it in order to emphasize the pre-reflexive character of media practice, in the *multidimensional personal habitus* (cf. Nohl 2006a, pp. 166-168). Because the scope of our research didn't allow us to investigate cultures of media practice in their full depth and complexity its results primarily pertain to the personal habitus of the interviewees and to the conjunctive experiential spaces they belong to. The present paper analyses the experiential spaces related to generation, whereas a second paper will address conjunctive experiences of gender.

The media practices of these experiential spaces are embedded in stocks of "conjunctive knowledge" (Mannheim 1982), i.e. in the "practical consciousness" (Giddens 1984) which is predominantly "a-theoretical" (Mannheim 1982). I differentiate between conjunctive knowledge embedded in action practice on the one hand and "communicative knowledge" (Mannheim 1982) on the other. The communicative knowledge usually refers to the motives of action (in-order-to motives, as Alfred Schütz [1971] puts it). It "is based on reciprocal ... presumptions of motives, which are institutionalized by society, that is, 'objectified', and are articulated explicitly or literally" (Bohnsack 2007, pp. 60-61).

Whereas communicative knowledge can be explicated by the interviewee when he or she gives motives and reasons for courses of action and events or evaluates them, habitualised media practices with their conjunctive knowledge can only be disclosed if we directly observe the action practice or find access to it by narrations and descriptions of the actor (cf. Bohnsack/Nentwig-Gesemann/Nohl 2007).⁵ The "implicit rules, which form the basis of media behaviour, that is to say, their being bound by collective practical experiences and patterns of orientation, cannot be comprehended by explicit questioning. Qualitative reconstructive approaches are more adequate for these purposes ..., since they do not decontextualise the behaviour; however, they take into consideration that media behaviour is embedded in a network of collective orientations" (Schäffer 2007, p. 34).

It is for this reason that I have chosen the narrative interview as the method of our research. Based on an initial question intended to generate a narration, the interviewer asked the interview partner to give us an account of their life-story. Our follow up questions stimulate narrations as well. They focus first of all on the media practices of the respective persons, especially those related to the BBC Turkish radio.

5. In narrations the interviewee depicts an order of events or a course of actions which have a beginning and an end. In descriptions we find recurring courses of action (e.g. of how one listens to the BBC each morning) or fixed facts (e. g. a radio on the cupboard).

Fritz Schütze (2003), who has developed this method, has underpinned the idea that such impromptu or off-the-cuff narrations are very close to the experiences of the narrator. Because the narration needs to be completed (to be given its ‘Gestalt’) and because the narrator has to condense and detail the narration, he or she gets entangled into the frame of his/her own experience. Hence within his/her narrations the narrator gives a deep insight into the layers of his or her experience. In this case we can assume – according to Schütze – a tight connection between the narrated and the lived experience. Nonetheless this experience is always embedded in the attitude of the narrator and in this sense ‘constructed.’⁶

While interpreting narrative interviews it is important to not only analyse the explicit aspects of the life-story as pointed out by the interviewees themselves. In addition, understanding the implicit patterns of media practices that shape and are embedded in daily practices is a prerequisite for qualitative analysis. Among the different approaches of qualitative analysis I have chosen a concept which is called “documentary method”. The documentary method, which has been developed by Ralf Bohnsack (see Bohnsack 2007; Bohnsack, Nentwig-Gesemann & Nohl 2007) on the basis of Karl Mannheim’s seminal work, is able to distinguish between explicit (communicative) knowledge and implicit (conjunctive) experiences and orientations within the interview material.

Whereas it is easy to understand the knowledge explicated during the interview (e.g. the reasons given for listening to the BBC), the implicit experiences and orientations of the interviewees can only be detected by comparing one interview to another. When we try to understand the specific frame within which a person handles a given problem, i.e. the frame of orientation, this orientation can only be identified vis-à-vis the frame of orientation of another interviewee who solves the same problem. E.g. the orientation within which somebody tries to get informed can only be identified if we put it against another interviewee’s information practices and their frame of orientation.

The documentary interpretation of narrative interviews, by comparing different cases, then intends to understand those orientations and experiences which are typical for a specific experiential space. E.g., by comparing persons of similar age and by contrasting these interviews to those of younger interviewees, generation-specific commonalities and differences can be identified. Hence the documentary method allows for a better understanding of how individual life stories are embedded in collective, dimensions of experiences (cf. Nohl 2006b).

Our sampling strategy for the comparative analysis emanates from theoretical considerations as well as from evidence accumulated during our empirical research. Generation-specific *modi operandi* of tuning in to the BBC turned out to be an important feature during the ongoing research. Aspects of gender can only be assumed since in this report only cases of male listeners are included. The comparison with female interviewees, planned for the second paper, will allow a deeper understanding also of gender-differences.

The identification of typical media practices, i.e. media practices typical for the generational or gender-specific experiential space, begins with discovering heterologous *modi operandi* of tuning in the BBC in two different cases (e.g. different by generation). Such heterologies refer to the differences between the cases within one dimension and can be abstracted to types within a one-dimensional typology. On the background of this difference other *modi operandi* become apparent in which these two cases are homologous. Here we can assume that the ho-

6. As a matter of course, in narrative interviews we find rather theoretical argumentations and evaluations too. This is because he/she explicates and theorizes on the motives and reasons for his/her own behaviour or evaluates it in the face of the interviewer. Argumentations and evaluations therefore have, as regards content, “a strong reference to the standpoint of the interviewee in the present time” (Schütze 1987, p. 149).

mologous *modus operandi* and the related type are to be assigned to a second experiential space. As soon as we contrast these cases with others (e.g. as soon as we compare male interviews to females) we will be able to shed light on this homologous *modus operandi* and to discover that it is gender-typical.

3. Research subjects

The present working paper consists of a comparative analysis of four research subjects, all of them based on interviews conducted in the capital of Turkey, Ankara, or in its biggest city, Istanbul. Though all the four persons are male and despite some indications toward gender-specific aspects in their media practices we will not expand on the construction of masculinities. As mentioned previously we, apart from occasional footnotes, would like to leave the issue of gender for the second working paper. In this chapter we introduce the interview partners with a short overview on their life-stories. Comparative analysis and type-construction towards their media practices is reserved for the following chapters.

Hakan Aksaraylı is the oldest person of our sample in Turkey. He was born in 1939 in Bursa, a wealthy city close to the Aegean Sea. Mr Aksaraylı graduated from political science in 1961. Then he received training in an institute for the administration of civil and public affairs as well as at a university in the United Kingdom. Back home he served in the civil service, first as the official head of a governmental district, later as governor of a province, the highest position a bureaucrat can obtain in Turkey. In 1980, with the military coup d'état, he was forced to retirement. He then worked as the director of an industrial firm. When the military government had gradually been replaced by civilians Mr Aksaraylı was again appointed as governor in 1990. It was only 2004 when he retired.

Ali Rıza Öztürk was born in 1957, in Trabzon, the biggest city of the Black Sea region. He made his career in the army which he served as an officer until 1997. When he retired he finished his degree in law which he even complemented with a Ph.D. in 1999. Meanwhile he worked as a lawyer for one year, and at the time of the interview he has been working as a researcher in a think tank, specialised on Middle East issues, army and terrorism. Mr Öztürk's wife had been a banker and is retired now. His son studies at university. Mr Öztürk is himself actively involved in media, preparing weekly TV-programmes. It was Ali Rıza Öztürk who introduced the interviewer to the third person of our sample, Mr Erguner.

Devrim Erguner was born in Izmir, a city at the Aegean, in 1977. Mr Erguner's parents are both English teachers. After high school he attended a study-programme in political science at Bosphorus University. Then he worked in a bank for two years and did a Ph.D. in the United States. The topic of his Ph.D. was international relations. On his return he has begun to work as a research assistant at a private Ankara-based university. Önder's sister is still a student at university. He himself is engaged to a French journalist working in Ankara.

*Önder Demir*⁷ was born in Bursa, a city in Western Anatolia in 1980. His mother is as an English teacher who had originally graduated from the Faculty of Management of an Istanbul based university. Önder's father is a graduate from a Faculty of Economics. Unfortunately Önder didn't tell us what his father's current professional occupation is. Still in high school Önder Demir turned out to be a very successful handball player. By completion of the high school, the Turkish "lyzeum", he therefore received a grant for studying media and communication systems at Yeditepe University in Istanbul due to his successes in sport. In 2001, after completing his studies with a Bachelors degree, he went to France in order to play handball and learn the language (for 2 or 3 years). Back home he did his military service and was in-

7. All names and other personal data changed.

scribed in a Master of Arts-programme in International Relations at Koc University. Throughout the interview Önder Demir makes clear that he is also a passionate civil society activist, working for the youth section of a liberal civil society association. Here he organises conferences on international politics which – according to his words – are attended by well known people from around the world. Hence he can easily combine this activity with his study programme.

4. The radio generation: the search for ‘objective’ information

Mr Öztürk and Mr Aksaraylı grew up in a period of analogue media. During their phase of primary and secondary socialization in Turkey only radio and newspaper existed as mediated news sources.⁸ Television was introduced to Turkey only in 1968 (cf. Kejanlıoğlu 2005, p. 156) and widely spread only by 1980ies. It is for this reason that we deal with both cases in this chapter and try to discover what kind of homologies Mr Öztürk and Mr Aksaraylı share – homologies that may allude to that media generation who was socialized in a period of analogue media.⁹ However there will be also differences between both cases given the fact that Mr Öztürk was born 19 years after Mr Aksaraylı.

The present chapter focuses on the singular cases, starting with Mr Aksaraylı and continuing with Mr Öztürk. Only after these case analyses it will be possible to draw some conclusions on their generational location.

Hakan Aksaraylı

When Hakan Aksaraylı was still a teenager, Turkey – and especially its country-side towns – was rather self-contained, far away from international politics or any international exchange. At those times Turkey had only recently changed its regime from the autocratic one party-system of Mustafa Kemal’s Republican People’s Party to a more democratic multi-party system.¹⁰ The economy was still primarily state-run and based on an import substitution industrialization system.¹¹ It was in this period that Mr Aksaraylı, then a young boy, started listening to the BBC:

Hakan Aksaraylı: When I attended the middle and high school English was one of my best subjects. My teacher had a small radio, of course there weren’t any televisions at those times, it even worked with batteries. He would put it up upon the cupboard. Nobody should touch it, children shouldn’t touch it. I would climb up the sofa and listen to it, always changing the programme. Not only the BBC but Middle East, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan I don’t know I listened to all of them on the radio. Of course I didn’t mostly listen to Turkish language programmes but to English ones. I wanted to improve my English. In the following years my passion for radios increased. I now have three or four radios in my house, one in each room, each fixed on one station. I either listen to music, or to the news programme. It began during the middle school, also in the high school, and the times after it. Anyway there wasn’t any other opportunity at all in the districts at the small places. As often as I had the opportunity I listened to its [the BBC’s] Turkish programme and even more often to the English one.

In these lines of the interview it is documented that the radio is being introduced as the door to the world. It is very significant that it is the English lesson in which Hakan Aksaraylı

8. In Turkey the first radio station was founded in 1927, with only 10000 receivers throughout the country in 1936 (cf. Kejanlıoğlu 2005, p. 149). Even in 1964 only 46 % of the country was covered with radio broadcasting (cf. Çalışlar 2005, p. 133).

9. In contrast, Mr Demir and Mr Erguner were socialized in a period of growing digital media.

10. For a comprehensive history of Turkey cf. Zürcher 2004

11. Only after 1980 the economy changed to a more liberal system.

makes acquaintance with the teacher's "small", 'battery' driven "radio." Along with the international language this device opens a new horizon for Hakan Aksaraylı, although he himself was primarily interested in learning and 'improving' his English. The BBC World Service Turkish Radio is only one of many radio stations Mr Aksaraylı used to tune in.

It seems to be quite typical that it is the teacher who introduces Hakan Aksaraylı (and his classmates) to international radio, given the fact that the Republican education system massively promoted Westernization and modernization not only during the 1950ies but until today (cf. Kafadar 1997).¹² That Mr Aksaraylı doesn't even mention media practices within his family points to the important influence of such educational efforts.

The preciousness and uniqueness of the radio is underpinned by the teacher's caveat not to touch it. Of course this made the radio all the more interesting for the children, among them Mr Aksaraylı whose "passion for radios" increased during the following years.

Mr Aksaraylı himself is aware of the contingencies of his "passion". He points to the peculiarities of the time and – especially – to the social space in which the radio was a rather unique information device. In the "small places" even national newspapers were not distributed or only with longer delays. The radio was the one and only fast media apparatus with which Mr Aksaraylı could get connected not only to his own country but to the world.

The importance of being socialized in the era of radio is documented in Mr Aksaraylı's insertion saying that even today his home is equipped with as many radios as rooms so that "in each room" he can listen to a different channel. In Mr Aksaraylı's biography, media has played the biggest role during those times of 'time-out', i.e. times when he was not bound to his daily routines of work. Directly after the account of his adolescent years Mr Aksaraylı mentions that around the time when he got retired he has discovered that the privately owned national radio channel "NTV" has included the "BBC's Turkish programme" into its daily broadcasting:

Hakan Aksaraylı: I discovered that NTV gives the BBC's Turkish programme. It also connects to its English programme at some time during the day. For this reason this is my favourite field of interest since three or four years. I don't watch television a lot. [...] The BBC Turkish broadcasting is in the morning at seven o'clock, half past six or at seven. At half past six there is the Voice of America, after that the BBC Turkish broadcasting. In general I listen to it four or five days a week.

That listening to the radio is his "favourite field of interest" since just as many years as he is retired (i.e. since 2004) doesn't seem to be a coincidence. In retirement Mr Aksaraylı pursues his "passion" again whereas the television (popular in Turkey since the 1980ies) remains in the background.

Listening to the BBC Turkish programme is apparently part of Mr Aksaraylı's daily life. He switches the radio on even before getting up in the morning. Then he listens to both the news of the "Voice of America" and the BBC which are broadcasted on the NTV channel one after the other. In the following part of the interview Mr Aksaraylı describes his daily routine of media practice:

Hakan Aksaraylı: When I get up in the morning the BBC is over. Right at 7.30 the newspapers have come. [...] Previously I used to read Radikal, [...] now I read the Hürriyet since one year. But apart from this I just peep in the other newspapers on the internet. When my newspaper work has ended at about nine or nine-thirty I turn to the internet. There is a game there I at any rate get stuck on that game. For this reason I'm very angry with me because I waist time. It is a card game. Something like fortune telling. It's called

12. The intriguing question whether Westernization and modernization were connected with a sense of cosmopolitanism or a fascination for the English will only be tackled in the second working paper.

Treasor. When this has finished I just have a look at the internet. On my computer I have the BBC, there are such interesting things, radios and TV channels. I tried to listen to them but failed. I didn't find it satisfactory. Because I couldn't choose what I wanted. That is it is possible to listen to the voice in the computer, both music and news. [...] They didn't really interest me. So I just follow the newspapers on the computer. But this is also different from reading the newspaper, you know, on the computer I only look at the headlines. When there is an interesting news or columnist's comment I read it. I cut many newspaper clippings. I have three or four box-files and I have difficulties in classifying them. There are very nice things in them, clippings as old as fifteen to twenty years. I cannot really say that I've used them, but nevertheless I continue to cut them. Whatever interesting I come across. From the veil issue to such topics as the European Union which I have tried to study.

The style in which Mr Aksaraylı describes his daily life shows that it follows a repetitive pattern of activities tightly connected to media. Catching up on the news plays an important role in this daily routine, especially in the mornings. That Mr Aksaraylı's endeavours to keep being informed aren't only a result of the boredom and free time of a retired man but are based on his eagerness to pursue meaningful activities is documented in his short and rather pejorative account of the "Treasure"-game in the internet.

Although Mr Aksaraylı goes online every day he doesn't use the internet as a new kind of media, i.e. as cyberspace, as a technology and space on its own right. For him the internet rather is an extension of analogue media. He "follows" the newspaper on the computer and is also acquainted with the BBC's website. But he only "looks at the headlines", refraining from in-depth-readings. Neither does he listen to the BBC's website edition of the radio: "I tried to listen to them but failed". From his words it is not clear whether he keeps a distance to the internet due to competence deficits or because he didn't find it "satisfactory". Presumably dissatisfaction and incompetence go hand in hand.

This 'analogue' modus operandi of his media practices is also documented in Mr Aksaraylı's account of the newspaper clippings. Whereas one can assume that people socialised in a digitalized age would – if at all – keep the newspaper 'clippings' in data files (and therefore one should not speak of 'clippings'), Mr Aksaraylı cuts them from the paper (sic!) and stores them in "box-files". Putting news in such a container and hence preserving them indicates that for Mr Aksaraylı news keeps its importance even when it gets old. It remains to be investigated if this attitude towards news and this analogue modus operandi of media practices is specific for Mr Aksaraylı or is shared by other people of his generation.

Above we have mentioned that news and information play a big role in Mr Aksaraylı's life as a retired person. The *meaning* of news and information in Mr Aksaraylı's everyday life is documented in the following passage. Here, the former governor first gives a short answer, but as the interviewer aptly insists on her question the interviewee reveals an important feature of his everyday practices:

Interviewer: Do you have any friends who listen to the BBC Turkish radio?

Hakan Aksaraylı: No, there isn't really anybody, no.

Interviewer: The reason why I have asked is, if you had friends I would have liked to know if you discuss news you have listened on the BBC Turkish radio, if you have any chats on it?

Hakan Aksaraylı: No, we haven't, no. But maybe like this: I think so. In order to act up I may have said "hey boys I have heard that news on the BBC". And they would have said "well done". ((Interviewer and interviewee laugh.)) Our discussions are usually. We are four class mates from faculty, with one of them I'm even friends since high school. With these four friends we meet very often. In a house of one of us. [...] the four of us meet and we drink a lot of alcohol, we discuss a lot, we quarrel with each other. There are very serious discussions, on recent Turkish history, on an article of a columnist of the day, on a word some politician has said that day, we have serious discussions which come close to fights.

Although the BBC Turkish radio itself is not a topic of the chats which Mr Aksaraylı has with his old friends whom he knows since at least his time in the “faculty”, the news he listens on the BBC play a significant role in these conversations: Mr Aksaraylı uses the BBC as a news-source for which he gathers the applause of his mates.

However information and news don't have a meaning as such. Instead, news is the material which fuels the meetings among his friends as do beverages: “we drink a lot of alcohol, we discuss a lot, we quarrel with each other”. These discussions usually focus on topics for which it is very helpful to be well informed. In the very situation of these discussions everybody is fixed on winning the argument (leading almost to “fights”). Here a competition for knowledge sovereignty (and for asserting one's own world view) is reproduced which may allude to a typically male pattern of discussion. Whereas this can only be clarified by comparing males to female audiences we are quite convinced that the winning is not the only and main orientation which underlies these discussions. Rather one should assume that these “serious discussions” are so important because the four old friends are able to reproduce their everlasting way of quarrelling with each other, their little jokes and, all in all, their way of coping with each other. Let alone, news (and discussing news) is a collective means of pastime.

Ali Rıza Öztürk

Interestingly, Mr Öztürk, almost twenty years younger than Mr Aksaraylı, is in search of valid and superior information too. But whereas for Mr Aksaraylı the (BBC-fed) news are a means of reproducing the discussion and friendship patterns Mr Aksaraylı shares with his old mates, Mr Öztürk uses the information provided by the BBC in a different way. Here too we turn to that passage of the interview in which Mr Öztürk was asked to describe how he discusses the BBC among friends. Again the answer to this question, being rather useless for the original intentions of the researchers, turned out to be very insightful for other purposes:

Ali Rıza Öztürk:

Well, maybe we don't discuss the BBC directly. When we discuss a topic everybody uses some data. Of course it is more interesting, because we go to the television and to the radio we see at those places that from time to time the television people and the radio people when they prepare for asking questions, my fields of interest are more the Middle East and connected with terrorism, I know they use the BBC as a reference for asking their questions. Well you see that the notes they have in front of them are printouts taken from the BBC. Well it is probably because we have a very special position. We can see them [the journalists], we can talk and discuss, and we have also a field on our own because we produce [television; AMN] too. Naturally in order to collect some information and data and so on and to keep these hot relations the BBC is used. I think it is a source to be consulted in the last minute.

Again, the BBC isn't a topic on its own. Rather Mr Öztürk uses it as a source for valid and up-to-date information. Listening to the BBC (or, rather, reading its website) makes a difference for Mr Öztürk as consulting BBC sources “in the last minute” gives him an advantage in political discussions. Similar to Mr Aksaraylı the meaning of being informed through the BBC is to get ones way during discussions and interviews. Later on we will discuss why it is so important for these two men to be well informed.

In contrast to Mr Aksaraylı the discussions which Mr Öztürk is engaged in don't take place in a friend's house but in the television and radio: Being well informed and being well prepared for the questions of journalists is part of Mr Öztürk's job as a researcher in a think tank, specialised on Middle East issues. This contrast points at differences concerning age and – connected with it – labour market inclusion.

However, Mr Öztürk's interest in the BBC originally isn't based on using its news and information in television and radio discussions. Different from Mr Aksaraylı he didn't develop a “passion” for radio in his youth but started listening rather ‘accidentally’:

Interviewer: Now can you mention a little bit when you started listening to the BBC Turkish and how you started how you discovered it?

Ali Rıza Öztürk: Well now, meanwhile I'm rather old by now ((laughs)). I started listening to the BBC in the beginning of my twenties. It was about the end of the seventies. At that time I had newly graduated. I served in a small town in the Erzurum province. Of course at that time there was the opportunity to listen to the radio. It began like this, then it went on like, in the past ten years I look at it [the website] almost seven days six days a week when I have any opportunity, I especially try to listen to it on the internet, at six seven rather in the evenings before I go to bed I go into the internet and look at it [the website] what has happened, if there is anything on the developments.

When Mr Öztürk “served” as an army officer in a small town near Erzurum, the radio may not only have been just one opportunity, but the one and only opportunity to gather information. Erzurum is a rural province in eastern Anatolia, where access to newspapers and other information sources must have been difficult, especially in the small towns of its countryside. For a man who graduated from one of the centres of political debate in Turkey, the faculty of political science in Ankara, it must have been a disruptive and disturbing (though very common) experience to be sent as an army officer to the very periphery of Turkey. Whereas for Mr Aksaraylı the BBC has been the *first* connection to ‘the world’, for Mr Öztürk it must have been the lifeline which connects him *back* to ‘civilization’.¹³

The frequency and meaning of tuning in to the BBC Turkish radio for Mr Öztürk has considerably changed since “ten years”, just about since the time when he retired from the army service. Since then he has been a regular listener of the BBC and also has used its internet services. In the following passage he again relates his interest in the BBC to his own active media practices, i.e. to his contribution to discussions in the radio and television:

Ali Rıza Öztürk: Like I have just mentioned earlier on I very often participate as a guest in such programmes on the television and radios as a commenter or discussion participant on what happens round us, the events. Especially I speak to the TRT [state television] with its channels, to channels like NTV, CNN-Türk, in the news channels of Turkey, or, because it is technically very easy on the telephone, to radio stations on events in Turkey. The topics I usually talk about are the Middle East and terrorism. And because it is like this you have to follow the agenda all the time. In the morning when I open the internet I usually read the BBC Turkish website. This gives me in general what there is in general in the English newspapers. Later we receive them as a parcel from an organisation. But I am curious what is there, what is being discussed in the public that day, what are the latest developments, if it is a topic which is in my field of interest, I read it in detail on the internet.

Alike Mr Aksaraylı who gains an advantage in the discussion with his friends by listening to the BBC, Mr Öztürk uses a specific section of the BBC's Turkish website on which he can get informed on “Middle East and terrorism” by reading the headlines of the “English newspapers”.¹⁴ The BBC's Turkish website provides him with further information on “latest developments” as well.

This intensive usage of the internet differentiates Mr Öztürk from Mr Aksaraylı, the oldest person of our sample who uses the internet only as a heavy-handed extension of analogue media. This may be explained with an aspect of the generational location which is tightly connected to technical development. Whereas Mr Aksaraylı has been socialized in an analogue

13. Until today disparities between urban middle class people (like Mr Öztürk) and the rural working class remain significant not only in terms of material wealth but especially of education, culture, and the way of conducting one's life in general. Such disparities must have been even more drastic for a member of the army, the institution which understands itself as the palladium of Western modernity in Turkey.

14. At this point it has to be mentioned that Turkish newspapers only give a very short and narrow account of international affairs.

age for the major part of his life, for Mr Öztürk, 19 years younger, the computer and the internet were available at latest when he retired from his army service in 1997 and joined academic life (where intelligent technologies were introduced quite early).

However Mr Öztürk's media practices are not limited to the internet. When he "goes back home in the evenings" he listens to the BBC on the radio:

Ali Rıza Öztürk: And when I go back home in the evenings I listen to it [the BBC Turkish radio] on NTV. For example there I listen what happened. Those events which have disappeared from my eyes are more detailed there. Now I see on the BBC some comments on Turkey which are less eh less objective than the other comments. If you ask what I see, the commentators on these topics are being chosen from people who are not seen as very neutral in Turkey. That is most of them are people who are known as having an ideological side, they are chosen as experts or as people who know the topic. [...] When you look who are these people when I personally look at this picture then there are the old Marxists, and people who don't give voice to the people in Turkey but give a voice to people who are in the minority a voice to the minority and moreover to the viewpoints of those who are negative. When it is like this I don't appreciate the comments on Turkey.

Whereas in the mornings the BBC is a source of information tightly related to his professional interests, in the evenings Mr Öztürk becomes a common listener who also follows those news which are outside his professional field.

It is interesting that and how he, himself being a commentator in the media, complains about the comments he listens to on the BBC in the evenings. The experts whom the BBC invites for comment on Turkish issues are described as "not seen as very neutral in Turkey". He accuses them of being "ideological" and "Marxist" as well as of having a "negative" perspective on the country. Later on he underpins that these commentators are in the "minority", that "95 % or 98 % of the people in Turkey don't think like them, there are just 2 % who think like them".

These complaints clearly point to the relationship between audiences in Turkey and the diasporic producers of the BBC Turkish services. Along with his assertion that the Turkish service is ideologically leftist, Mr Öztürk presumes that the BBC producers are not very familiar with the standpoint of "the people in Turkey". This transcultural relationship between diasporic producers and Turkish audiences will be further investigated in future papers.

Orientations toward objectivity

Underlying Mr Öztürk's complaints is an orientation towards objectivity and adherence to normalcy. The majority is assumed to constitute the normalcy which Mr Öztürk then swiftly connects with objectivity. The supposition that a radio channel – and especially the BBC – is able to and is obliged to give objective information is also documented in the following passage in which Mr Öztürk comments on the "general broadcasting policy" of the BBC:

Ali Rıza Öztürk: Of course there is a general broadcasting policy. This is a broadcasting policy they try to follow in some relations with the English government. That is these people wish that it be perceived as a radio channel which tells the truth ... But doing so there are some criteria which they obey as well. Of course not in the direction that it is 100 % objective and true. But when it comes to Turkey, just because we know the experts in Turkey and the sources better, all of a sudden the BBC in our mind, now you are doing just such big efforts but the people you have chosen [as experts] don't fit to this. All of us have an opinion on these speakers. When you bring these names who are so marginal in Turkey when I listen to them I say excuse me. Again he comes and tells us the old stories. Well as a listener I think like this. What happens then, for me it is not very meaningful, then the concrete events are important for me, this man died, it happened like this, he was attacked like that and so on. When it comes to comments concerning comments it appears to me like there is a inducement.

Because he doubts the objectivity of those commentators who don't represent what the majority considers normal, Mr Öztürk reduces the function of the BBC Turkish radio to a source of

information on “concrete events”, e.g. murders etc. which he apparently assumes to be reported objectively. This orientation towards objectivity or, more exactly, this orientation towards the assumption that there is objectivity will have to be investigated further because we find a homologous orientation in the interview with Mr Aksaraylı. Moreover this orientation can be assumed to be generation-specific since we will reconstruct a considerably different orientation among the younger men of our sample.

Mr Aksaraylı is orientated towards objectivity and neutrality as well. In the course of the interview he compares the BBC to the Turkish state radio “TRT” and gives some details on how a radio becomes “neutral” or – as one could translate the Turkish word “tarafsız” as well – objective:

Hakan Aksaraylı: I consider the TRT close to the BBC. Recently they also have something in the selection and presentation of news, I don't know your profession but you put one word into news and its message changes. Our people do that, i.e. I say it for the English when they mention Cyprus or the Turkish soldiers in Cyprus you say the “Turkish occupation army”, if you use the word occupation you give a different message. If you say, like our people do, “army of peace” you do something else. Or there is a difference between saying the “Armenian genocide” and saying “the so-called Armenian genocide”. Well our TRT radios do that more often. At the BBC I don't feel that. I can say that I consider the BBC more neutral. For example recently I paid attention. There are the English in Iraq now. But for the American army they say “occupation army” although they are within it themselves. Our radio cannot do this. That is a fine thing. It is a peculiarity of the BBC.

Hasan Aksaraylı considers questions of neutrality analysing the depths of semantics. Whereas Mr Öztürk just thinks that the comments are one-sided and “Marxist,” for Mr Aksaraylı the small “words” which can change a whole sentence's meaning are important. Although in the examples which he gives to the interviewer one could assume that these small words define the meaning of both the BBC's and the TRT's sentences, Mr Aksaraylı insists that the TRT does that “more often”, i.e. that the Turkish state radio gives the genuine sentence a “different message.” As is documented in this passage Mr Aksaraylı assumes the BBC to be “more neutral” because it doesn't shrink away from naming British-American “occupation” of Iraq. In Mr Aksaraylı's eyes the distance towards its own government is the main evidence for the BBC's objectivity.

Mr Aksaraylı's sensitivity to language doesn't stop at the literal meaning of the words broadcasted in the BBC. He also considers the melody and style, with which the news on the BBC is presented, as the interviewer, Ms Olcay Nohl, learns to her surprise:

Interviewer: I will tell you the headlines of the morning programme you know it is presented under some headlines and you will tell me what you think about these headlines, or rather about the programme.

Hakan Aksaraylı: Ms Olcay, before all else I have to say the following. For one thing I very much appreciate the speakers' style of presenting the news. That is our news speakers talk so loud and noisy. E.g. “within short time” like pushing my head and they give the same news fifty times. The news speakers of the BBC are Turks as well. I don't know why they are like this over there and why they are like that when they come here. But the presentation manner over there is so soft. This really pleases me first of all. They give the news, this pleases me as well, they give it short, then they give one or some of them in detail. Either they have somebody on the telephone they expand the news by a telephone connection or it can also be an American or an English person, they give it and translate it to Turkish. That is they first give the news as a summary and then they give the more important news in depth. I appreciate this style.

Although the question posed by the interviewer is intended to stimulate a discussion on the contents of the BBC news and to bring the interviewee into the flow of narrating his media practices, Mr Aksaraylı first insists on commenting on the “speakers' style of presenting the news”. Here the BBC is compared to news presentation in Turkey in general. To Mr Aksaraylı's mind these news are presented in such a volume and excitement that they are even

“pushing” his “head”. But it is not only the melody and style the speakers adopt at the BBC which pleases Mr Aksaraylı. He puts this in the wider frame of the news broadcast: Whereas in Turkey the same news is repeated “fifty times”, the BBC first offers a “short” summary of the news and then goes into the depth of “some” news, presumably of the more important ones.

These words of Mr Aksaraylı show that he is orientated towards a certain solidity and sincerity in which news have to be presented. These characteristics are the background on which a news broadcast becomes ‘neutral’ or even ‘objective’. Solid news is presented by even-tempered speakers in a foreseeable and reasonable structure.

5. Generation and media

Some of those peculiarities shared by Mr Aksaraylı and Mr Öztürk will – in spite of the undeniable differences between them – turn out to be generation-specific, i.e. typical for a generational “conjunctive experiential space” (Mannheim 1982, p. 194) as soon as we compare these two men with two further cases of younger people. The search for objective information (as well as lamenting the lack of it) in particular will be evident as typical for a generation who was raised in the era of radio. However, before we go on with the empirical analysis we would like to ask the reader to bear with us as we expound in more detail on the theoretical concept of generation and its relevance for media practice cultures.

Common sense-concepts often define ‘generation’ as the affiliation of a group of people to one cohort of birth, i.e. as peers. However in sociology the concept of generation becomes relevant in at least three aspects: First one speaks of “family generations”, i.e. generation becomes relevant “at the level of the family, generation refers to position in the lineage” (Kohli 2004, p. 2). Second one can speak of welfare generations. Here, generation is relevant “in respect of public economic resources and obligations (that is, with regard to participation in the labour market or to welfare redistribution)” (Kohli 1996, p. 4). The third definition, which is also the important one for this research, highlights generation as the social aggregate of a specific ‘Weltanschauung’ (worldview): “The historical impact of different generations on society is in part a consequence of their particular location in the development of a society or culture. The temporal location of a cohort is important in terms of the opportunities, chances and resources that happen to be available to them” (Edmunds/Turner 2005, p. 561).

If one wants to discuss generation as the point of culmination of a specific Weltanschauung, i.e. for a worldview characteristic for the position of an age group in a given historical period, it is conducive to consult the seminal work of Karl Mannheim on “The problem of generations”, written 1928 but still path-breaking for the sociology of generations.

Karl Mannheim’s starting point is the concept of “generational location” (1972, p. 113) which refers to a potential of experiences in a specific “historical and cultural region” (ibid., p. 118). This “historical and cultural region” is characterised by the affiliation to the same cohort, i.e. to the same age-group in a given period. This location already “restricts the range of self-expression open to the individual to certain circumscribed possibilities” and suggests “certain definite modes of behaviour, feeling, and thought” (ibid., p. 106). E.g. both Mr Aksaraylı and Mr Öztürk grew up in a time and place for which the radio was the main (and sometimes even only) source of mediated information.

Whereas the generational location is characterised by potential opportunities and can be identified from outside, i.e. beyond the experiences of the people under research, Karl Mannheim defines the concrete “participation in the common destiny of this historical and social unit” (ibid., p. 118) with two other concepts: First the “generation as actuality” (ibid.) with its formative experiences, which comprises of all those who really participate in the destiny of their

generation. Second the “generational unit” (ibid.) in which these generation-specific experiences are processed and handled with in a distinguishable way.

The individual is socialised within the formative experiences of his/her generation. This is because the “basic intentions and formal principles” of the respective ‘generation as actuality’ are “the primary socialising forces in the history of society” (Mannheim 1972, p. 121).

New generation-specific formative experiences (in the sense of generation as actuality) are constituted when people obtain a “‘fresh contact’ with the social and cultural heritage” of the society (ibid., p. 108), because, due to the “non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous” (Pinder 1926, p. 21), they participate in the societal events in a different, earlier biographical phase of their life than older people and are therefore not inhibited by the existential attachment of the latter. It is for this reason that the adolescence phase and youth in general plays a major role in social change. This “novel approach in assimilating, using, and developing the proffered material” (Mannheim 1972, p. 108) is a major constituent of transformation in society.

The *Weltanschauung* of a generation is usually thought to be political. In fact it has been discussed whether the concept of ‘generation’ can be linked to political struggle. E.g. Edmunds & Turner have argued that “generations shift from being a passive cohort (‘generation in itself’) into a politically active and self-conscious cohort (‘generation for itself’) when they are able to exploit resources (political/educational/economic) to innovate in cultural, intellectual or political spheres” (Edmunds/Turner 2005, p. 562).

Yet generations don’t have to be “active generations” (ibid.) in the political sense of the meaning. If a word-view is not “a product of thinking” but embedded in practice, as Dilthey (1911, p. 15) has put it, or, to use a term of Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge, embedded in a “space of conjunctive experience” (Mannheim 1982), generations may be characterised by a great variety of features and aspects of action-practice. One of these aspects is the usage of media.

We draw here on Schäffer’s theory of “generation-specific cultures of media practice” (see Schäffer 2003; 2007; see also Nohl 2007). This theory starts “from the assumption that independent forms and styles of behaviour jointly with the available media develop for the respective cohorts in their youth on basis of generation-specific media experiences and practice. These styles of action are intensifying in cultures of media practice and they appear to the actors in their youth to be a quasi ‘natural’ form of acting by means of media per se. We are dealing in this context with a naturalisation of independent media practice by young people” (Schäffer 2007, p. 35). The style of media practice developed and adopted as ‘normal’ during adolescence – e.g. the radio practice of Mr Aksaraylı and Mr Öztürk – forms the way in which one approaches media over the life-span. “These cultures of media practice, which have been hypostatised as ‘normal’ in adolescence have ... a tendency to be strengthened and they are gradually gaining a generation-specific dimension” (ibid., p. 35-6). However, this generation-specific space of conjunctive experiences is also constituted by other than media-related practices and experiences. E.g. the search for ‘objective’ information disclosed in the interviews with Mr Aksaraylı and Mr Öztürk presumably is not confined to their media practices but characteristic for their generation in general.

The generation-specific media practices of Mr Aksaraylı and Mr Öztürk will become more evident as soon as we contrast them to those of the other two interviewees of this paper (Mr Demir and Mr Erguner, see chapter 6). Yet these generational peculiarities shouldn’t blur the researchers’ empirical awareness for the multidimensionality of culture and the personal habitus, respectively. Cultures of media practice are always constituted as an overlap or syncretism of different spaces of conjunctive experience. We may assume that the media practices of all interviewees discussed in this paper are typical for the well educated autochthonous urban

middle class milieus as well as gender-specific, although we cannot empirically reconstruct this in this report.¹⁵

6. The digital generation: BBC WS as one perspective in a complex multimedia landscape

When Mr Demir, born 1980 and Mr Erguner, born in 1977, were growing up and became adolescents, computers were recently introduced into schools, especially in urban areas (cf. Akkoyunlu/Orhan 2001; Akkoyunlu 2002). In the end of the 1990ies, access to the internet became possible, especially in the numerous internet cafés throughout the Turkish cities. Far more important for every day media practices, the television market was liberalised from 1991 onwards. In addition to the state television TRT new private television channels emerged (and some perished soon).¹⁶ Internet access and the privatisation of television were the cause of an immense pluralisation and complexity of the media landscape. It is against this background that we reconstruct the media related experience of Mr Demir and Mr Erguner.

Devrim Erguner

Mr Erguner, the young academic specialised in international relations, had come in touch with the BBC's Turkish radio while writing his Ph.D. in the United States. As regards his generational embedding, it is very telling how Devrim Erguner narrates his first experiences:

Devrim Erguner: I [got to know] the BBC Turkish during doctorate from a friend, from a Turkish friend, he looked at it a lot, well in America, it was him, I saw it from him, this here is not bad he said, well my first reaction was why is this necessary to look at the Turkish when I can read its English version and so on. Then I looked at it myself and I thought that because it is more focussed on the region on Turkey it might be interesting. And this was three or four years ago. It was that time that I first saw it. How did I discover the radio? I assume it was in the car of a friend, maybe it has been the car of Ali Rıza Öztürk, I discovered, oh no, no, no, prior to this I saw it on the NTV, the BBC Turkish service, its adverts, i.e. because I consider the BBC as a good source of news I said to myself let's listen to this. This is how it started.

Although the reader of this passage might at first be inclined to think that Mr Erguner has watched the BBC on television, the fact that there is neither a television nor a radio broadcasting of the BBC Turkish service to be received in America makes it clear that it is the internet through which Mr Erguner gets access to the BBC. That he doesn't even mention the internet shows that Mr Erguner takes using this media and surfing in the internet for granted. Interesting enough he wasn't interested in the radio broadcasting at that time, although there is an audio device on the BBC Turkish website.

Only when he returned to Turkey Mr Erguner discovered the amenities of listening to the Turkish radio of the BBC. Remarkably, he depicts Ali Rıza Öztürk, his older friend, as a regular user of his auto radio whereas he himself switches between quite different types of media, among them also the NTV television channel where he had seen the BBC advertisement even before.

In spite of such differences Mr Erguner shares with the older interviewees a particular interest in the *news* of the BBC. It is the information provided by the BBC which makes it so attractive for all people investigated in this paper. This interest in news is the predominant orientation within which the BBC becomes relevant. Rather than choosing the news from amongst

15. It will be the task of the second working paper to analyse differences concerning the gender-specific location of tuning in to the BBC World Service.

16. Although there have been private television channels working from abroad since 1990, only in 1993 the constitution was changed as to allow private television and radio (cf. Kejanlioğlu 2006, p. 166).

different types of program of the BBC (e.g. there is a program on arts as well as special series), following the news is the overall frame within which Mr Erguner discovers the BBC.

Whereas the other interviewees haven't been very much interested in the news on Turkey, it is precisely the news "on the region on Turkey" which make the BBC attractive for Mr Erguner. This special interest in the news coverage of Turkey might be typical for Mr Erguner's diasporic social location in the United States. One indicator for this diasporic location is the fact that when describing his present (post-migrational, Turkey-based) media experiences with the BBC, the young academic is interested in the world wide net of correspondents rather than in the Turkey coverage:

Interviewer: How do you like the news bulletin of the BBC Turkish radio?

Devrim Erguner: I like some things and I don't like others. Well I shouldn't say I don't like them, they don't interest me they bore me. But the advantage of the BBC is always the following: They have correspondents at so many places. Without doubt this is because of the British Empire and so on and so forth. These people have contact persons at every place of the world. There are so many fights, and not only fights but also economic events, trade treaties which don't go into my professional field of concern and which I don't know about. And these are situated in places outside my field of concern, e.g. in Africa etc., or in East Asia. It is the BBC and its Turkish radio where I can best obtain such news. For example this pleases me, what do I know, one or two weeks ago this was good, eeh, in Korea the boss of a big automobile company, presumably Hyundai, was convicted and so on and so forth, it was really nice news. And it was a topic which I would never really be into and read on it because it is not my field of interest but it is very nice to listen to it there and to learn more about the event. Or on the fights in Africa, or lately, where was the fight, the Somalians went into Ethiopia, things like that, things which I don't really know about. But the BBC, because it has a different perspective on the world, because it has correspondents in every part of the world, maybe not everywhere but this is my impression. This pleases me, on the BBC I can listen to those news, which I cannot reach otherwise, for which to reach I don't make any effort.

Without mentioning any coverage on Turkey, Mr Erguner makes it clear that it is the comprehensive net of correspondents which fascinates him about the BBC. In contrast to his friend, Mr Öztürk, Devrim Erguner isn't following the BBC news as a part of his business. Rather he regards the BBC Turkish radio as a means to broaden his horizon beyond the limits of his "professional field of concern". When he gives examples of such information it becomes evident that he doesn't search for it but lets himself be surprised by the miscellaneous diversity of news. From business stories in Korea to invasions in Ethiopia, the BBC correspondents succeed in attracting Mr Erguner's attention to the wide world with its numerous incidents.¹⁷

It is coherent that Mr Erguner most regularly listens to the BBC when he is off work, as is documented in the account of his daily media practices:

Devrim Erguner: I listen to the BBC Turkish only when I go back home in my car, between six and seven on NTV. Well, sometimes, once in forty years I look at the Turkish website, if there is something important or so, what do I know, sometimes there is a survey or something, a research. For example the last time that I looked, it was some months ago, the BBC had organised it, it was named "Perspectives on America", in I don't know how many countries of the world. For ex-

17. If we compare this part of Mr Erguner's interview to e.g. the interview conducted with Mr Aksaraylı a clear generational difference concerning the attitude towards news from beyond the borders of Turkey becomes apparent. Whereas Mr Aksaraylı in the early nineteen fifties only *discovered* the world when listening to the international radio channels as a fascinated child, for Mr Erguner getting informed about the world beyond Turkey is a *matter of course*. Or, to put it in other, more generalized words, whereas in Mr Aksaraylı's generation discovering international radio broadcasting was part of the Westernization and modernization project of Turkey, Mr Erguner is already cosmopolitan. Of course this cosmopolitanism (as well as the Westernization efforts) cannot be referred to the whole generations of the persons mentioned but to specific generational units also signified by middle class milieus. Such differences concerning cosmopolitanism will be investigated further in the second working paper.

ample I heard this in the Turkish media and then I went to the BBC Turkish website and to the English one as I remember. Well in order to read the research in more length. [...] But returning from work to home I listen to the BBC Turkish.

The way Mr Erguner allows the BBC to surprise him with unexpected news from beyond his field of professional interest is to regularly listen to the radio news in the evenings, when he goes “back home in my car”. He contrasts this random news picking during his regular listening hour with occasionally conferring to the BBC’s Turkish website when he is alerted by Turkish media to specific and lengthy documentaries and research reports (e.g. “Perspectives on America”).

As the interviewer is intrigued by this occasional usage of the internet service she asks as to when Mr Erguner feels the “need” to go to the BBC’s website:

Interviewer: When do you feel this need?

Devrim Erguner: When do I feel the need? For example, the Turkish media is like that, they receive information from international media corporations but they broadcast it in a very bad way, they cut it and give only the Turkish focus, i.e. they ruin the news. If the news is from the BBC and if I’m interested in it I will for sure go back to the BBC Turkish and to this news, to the BBC’s long version of it, serious. Well I consider the BBC as a more serious channel.

Similarly to those occasions when Mr Erguner is alerted to the special documentaries of the BBC by the Turkish media the latter’s failure to provide full international news coverage prompts him to confer to the BBC’s website. Behind this practice lies the orientation not to take information at face value but to investigate its origins and follow it back to its very source.

Alike the other interviewees Mr Erguner tries to look behind the curtains of news production and is intrigued by the BBC’s specific style of giving the news. However this young academic doesn’t focus on the (contested) objectivity of BBC news but questions the words in which the BBC wraps news up. Adding to his comments on the BBC’s worldwide net of correspondents Mr Erguner says:

Devrim Erguner: Apart from this it has the following political side, the BBC. They try to be neutral within their options I understand, that is fine. But sometimes in some situations the sense of neutrality vanishes. For example I am a political scientist, that is I know the technical definition of terrorism. I know what terror is and what it is not. It’s not only the topic of Turkey and the PKK. The BBC doesn’t name the PKK as terrorist or so. This is also the case in Africa and in the Middle East. Here and there. Eeh, maybe it’s because it is my field, but terrorism is something you can technically define. But the BBC never in its life, well it does everything not to declare an organisation or a group terrorist and that is a little bit funny. Things like that. From one side it is good, maybe this has to be considered. But from another side it is, well, what do I know, well if you don’t say terrorist to the Khmer Rouge, well I don’t have an exact example right now, sometimes you say to yourself are you going to name these people militants or freedom fighters too? How many people have these guys murdered, they have committed civil massacres. Such reactions do I have towards the BBC Turkish or the BBC in general.

Rather than discussing if the BBC *is* objective/neutral or not Mr Erguner analyses how the World Service *tries* to be “neutral” and how this insistence on neutrality may become “a bit funny”. The BBC’s reluctance (or even fear) of words which are burdened with political debate (“terrorism”) ends up in using terms (e.g. “freedom fighters”) inadequate for depicting groups like the “Khmer Rouge”.

It is documented in his complaint about the BBC’s obsession (as he views it) to appear neutral that Mr Erguner is not himself orientated towards neutrality or objectivity. Rather he appreciates the BBC’s efforts “to be neutral” although he himself sees its pitfalls.

However, beyond the policy of political terms Mr Erguner feels that while the BBC is trying to provide in-depth information on political issues it cannot but make a choice between different political positions:

Devrim Erguner: I like that. To find an expert for a specific topic and to take his/her comments. For example recently there was this, related to the last events in Palestine. The agreement between Hamas and Fatah, something happened. Well they get connected to different experts, that is good. On the other hand to how many experts can you connect to? How many, if it is a topic like the Palestine conflict if it is a topic where you have many different perspectives, the BBC is able to connect to only one expert. For example when they got connected that time it was a more Arab supporter. Of course in the program which I listened to. And they did this everyday. I don't know the Israeli perspective, it was virtually non-existent in these news. Well on such occasions you may get into doubt. But of course they may have some technical problems, maybe their time is limited, I don't know. [...] It can cause doubts. Because the BBC is quite a leftist channel. You know it yourself it is leftist-etatist. It can cause doubts sometimes. Although I always follow it and although I ask my students to follow it I always listen to the BBC with such doubts in my head.

Mr Erguner doesn't condemn the BBC for its choice of commentators and its political standpoint. He rather contents himself with detecting it. In the account of the news coverage on the Palestinian conflict it is evident that according to Mr Erguner there are, firstly, always different points of view which cannot be weighed up against each other. (In contrast Mr Öztürk insists on the "majority's" true position and refuses that of the "minority".) Secondly, due to "technical problem" and the limits of "time" every news station has to make a political choice of whom to interview. Third, in spite of these considerations Mr Erguner continues to follow the BBC Turkish news and even encourages his students to do so as well. This is framed by the media related orientation that while listening to the BBC one has always "such doubts" in ones "head."

Although Mr Erguner in the passage above speaks only of the BBC, the following part of the interview shows that he approaches all media with "such doubt." After discussing the BBC's perspective on the PKK (with similar results as above), he puts the BBC in the wider frame of the media in general:

Devrim Erguner: On one side there is no chance that any media be neutral. For example I read the Economist, they are from the other side, that is from the side of money. More right wing liberal. That is I read them always with doubts in my head too. Like well they say so but isn't there some disinformation in it? My doubts are not only towards the BBC but when I listen to the BBC things like this always occur to my mind.

The starting point of Mr Erguner's approach to media is taking into account the impossibility of being "neutral." This is combined with a distant observation of the political standpoints of the respective media. Such a distant observation refrains – as is apparent from Mr Erguner's narrative account – from morally condemning such one-sidedness. He rather counteracts the inevitable partiality with the intuitive method of doubting. Whereas for the above cited passage from the interview one could have assumed that this doubt is situational, i.e. that it is exclusively applied for some topics covered by the BBC, it is now evident that in Mr Erguner's media-related experiences "doubt" is a method, i.e. a regular and generalised way to habitually handle information.

'Assisted' by the interviewer Mr Erguner then consequently identifies a very important feature of such doubting. When the interviewer tries to repeat Mr Erguner's observation she goes as far as to suggest that he uses "comparisons" as a means of fostering doubt:

Interviewer: Well, the BBC Turkish radio, in fact, as you said, all media, the radio, television has a certain policy. It is a little bit difficult to be neutral. When you think like that, that it is partial, you will surely want to or do make comparisons for a specific information or in general? In this case which media do you use or?

Devrim Erguner: In fact I always proceed comparatively.

Interviewer: Yes I have noticed this but if you give names.

Devrim Erguner: Well I always read the Economist, since America. If we look at England the BBC and the Economist balance each other. If we look at America for foreign politics I read the New York

Times, for domestic politics the Washington Post. The right wing Fox, CNN, MSNBC, supposedly, the Americans say liberal, they say liberal-leftist, but it is as if it is against it.

Regardless of the specific media sources Mr Erguner uses for ‘balancing’ the news sources (and regardless if the description of their political standpoint is accurate), he willingly picks up the wording of the interviewer and underpins the importance of “comparison” by giving examples of the way he proceeds with the news. In this conversation with the interviewer it is documented that Mr Erguner reckons with the partiality of all news sources (including the BBC) and compares the different partialities with each other in order to foster his doubts and to obtain a multi-faceted picture of the political events in the world. The multi-perspectivity he encounters in the media is not a point of lamentation but an absolutely common obstacle to be tackled with the distance of a comparing observer.

Önder Demir

When Önder Demir, the Istanbul based master-student in international relations, describes his everyday practices concerning media, we find patterns quite similar to those of Mr Erguner. Before we discuss Mr Demir’s approach to questions of objectivity and (im)partiality, we need to have a look at the beginning of his interest in the BBC Turkish radio. Being asked how he started to listen to the Turkish radio, Mr Demir’s answer reveals several media-related features typical for his generation:

Interviewer: Well, how did you start to listen to the BBC Turkish radio, how did you discover it, could you please tell us a little bit about that?

Önder Demir: Now, I won’t remember the exact date but

Interviewer: Approximately

Önder Demir: Approximately, I guess it was in the middle of 2006. In the middle of 2006 it happened, I looked at a piece of news. An email at bbc.com.uk diverted me to the Turkish site. And on the left side there were languages. Like Turkish, Kurdish, Serbian, and so on. In this way I have seen that the BBC or rather its radio broadcasts in other languages as well. I had not thought that it is so global.

Alike Mr Erguner, Önder Demir discovers the BBC Turkish radio in the internet. Probably attracted by a link (rather than an “email”), he realizes that the BBC provides services in several “languages”. This digital approach to the BBC goes along with certain aloofness. The BBC is not the one and only – or at least most important – source of news but one among many others. In addition, the fact that the BBC broadcasts in Turkish isn’t of major importance for Mr Demir. He is aware of this service but doesn’t put any further emphasis on it.

This reserved approach to the Turkish radio of the BBC gets comprehensible as soon as one refers to Mr Demir’s everyday practice of using media. He gives a long account of his rich media practices which I will analyse step by step:

Önder Demir: In fact as Istanbul is a big city, a cosmopolitan city people’s access to media is generally in the morning by newspapers. Because as at the workplaces one cannot or must not watch television in the morning people have only the opportunity to peep at the news for a short moment when they leave their home. When I am having my breakfast in the morning I am usually able to get the headlines of CNN and BBC from the television. Then, because for coming to this side [of the Bosphorus, AMN] I take the sea bus, I buy the Radikal newspaper from the dealer, I buy the Cumhuriyet newspaper, my eyes move around the headlines. But one advantage of working in the liberal civil society association is that because it is of course a civil society association which has to follow the agenda, I have the opportunity to look at the important news in the internet, to follow them by going into the respective sites of the internet.

Mr Demir follows the news from a wide range of media. This doesn’t only include different types of media, from newspaper over television to the internet, but extends to different sources within each of them. E.g. he reads as different newspapers as the “Radikal”, a liberal

paper, and the “Cumhuriyet”, a rather old fashioned Kemalist organ which exists since the early days of the Republic. Interesting enough, the BBC Turkish radio doesn’t play any role, important enough to be mentioned, in his weekday media practices.

Whereas this first part of his account gives the impression that Mr Demir follows a very broad range of news sources while at the same time keeping at the surface of events, in the second part of the account we learn more about his in-depth inquiries into the news:

Önder Demir: As concerns the weekend my weekend passes by at the computer. If you ask why, I think it is beneficial for my thesis. Because the news which the BBC and CNN make on the Middle East are very detailed and objective, especially those of the BBC. In this regard, it gives the news from Israel and the Gaza strip and West Jordan with different perspectives. One from the mouth of an Arab correspondent, the other from the mouth of an Israeli correspondent. Or to mirror the events from different perspectives by sending two Americans to the two different regions. That is very good as regards using them as references in my thesis.

The in-depth use of the media which Mr Demir prefers on weekends is based on a similar pattern as the surface news ride described above: Both are structured by an orientation to referring to different sources of information. The reason why the BBC (and, to a lesser degree, the CNN) is declared “objective” lies in its endeavours to allow for different authentic perspectives in its programme, e.g. for voices from “Israel and the Gaza strip”. That means that the BBC is not only regarded as one perspective in the multitude of different opinions to be found in contemporary media but is appreciated as one of the few sources which guarantee multi-perspectivity in its own programme.

In contrast to Mr Erguner, Önder Demir uses the news provided by the BBC (presumably rather the English than its Turkish edition) for professional purposes, i.e. for augmenting his thesis with “references”. Interestingly it is the BBC Turkish radio which he listens to when he wants to follow his private political curiosity. When he listens to the BBC Turkish version in the morning via the NTV channel, Mr Demir is curious about its perspective on Turkish events:

Önder Demir: When I use the BBC Turkish radio it is usually because of events in Turkey. What kind of events? For example the resignation problems after the elections in November 2002, then the assassination of Hrant Dink. And to be able to understand the relations between the Turkish Armed Forces, the government and the president of the republic in a better way and to be able to see them with the perspective of the BBC Turkish radio.

Here again, it is not objective in-depth information Mr Demir is after, but the “perspective” of the BBC.

7. On generational differences and commonalities of social milieus

Although a media practice culture may appear to us as a single entity, it is always multidimensional. In media practice cultures, different dimensions of the social realm overlap. If we only take into consideration the media practices of a single person like Mr Demir, we wouldn’t be able to identify those dimensions pertaining to age, gender, social milieus or generation. As soon as we compare different media practice cultures (and the persons who represent them) we may discover their multidimensionality.

On the other hand the empirical analysis of the multidimensionality of media practice cultures is always restricted to the opportunities of comparison provided in a specific sample. The sampling strategy followed in this report allows for identifying different generational facets of media practice cultures, whereas other dimensions like gender and social milieu remain hidden in the empirical material.

The main difference between the younger and the older men interviewed concerns their attitude towards (im)partiality. Whereas the older persons, Mr Aksaraylı and Mr Öztürk, are

clearly orientated towards neutrality and objectivity and praise or accuse the BBC for their respective endeavour or failure, Mr Demir and Mr Erguner assume that no media can ever be neutral or objective as such. Rather these two young academics try to approach mediated news by doubting its sources and by comparing the different perspectives in which news are given by the various media companies. This difference between the search for objectivity on the one hand and the multi-perspectivity on the other refers to the respective generational spaces of conjunctive experiences in which the persons interviewed are situated. It must be assumed that this generational difference doesn't only pertain to media practices.

The media practices themselves are a little bit more complex. If we contrast the oldest person of our sample, Mr Aksaraylı, to the younger academics, contrasting approaches to the technical facets of media are documented: Whereas for the younger ones digital media is a normal, never questioned prerequisite they know since their socialisation as adolescents, Mr Aksaraylı has grown up in a world of analogue media, especially in a world of radio. Mr Aksaraylı's media practices are still very much influenced by analogue media; in contrast, Mr Öztürk who shares a somewhat similar analogous media youth with Mr Aksaraylı today has a different attitude towards digital media. In a way, Mr Öztürk is, as regards media practices, embedded in a transitional generation unit, i.e. in a generation unit which is very much affected by the transition from analogue to digital media. This transition has to be seen within the context of Mr Öztürk's first experiences with the internet. These first experiences were made during a phase of further education (Ph.D.) after the retirement as an army officer. Such time outs are typical phases for discovering novelty, even such novelty which one is not likely to discover as a member of one's generation.

Though they remain hidden in the empirical analysis for the lack of suitable cases of comparison, aspects of social milieu in the media practice cultures of the persons investigated in this report can be anticipated. Albeit their generational differences the four persons, who have been interviewed for this report, share a similar position regarding social milieu. They themselves (the older generation) or at least their parents (as concerns the younger generation) follow a career within the state which provided them with a considerable social status though this high social esteem was not combined with a high income. All interlocutors belong to the aspiring fractions of the middle class milieu whereas these aspirations depend on education rather than on income revenue (e.g. Mr Öztürk prefers to do a Ph.D. rather than earn a fortune in a law firm).

Against this social background we can identify a few peculiarities in the media practice cultures which refer to social milieu. Of course access to radio and especially to the internet is not equally distributed throughout Turkey but differentiated by social class (and as well by the division between country-side and urban areas). But more importantly, the educational ambition as well as the habit of closely following the news and of engaging in political debates (be it in Mr Demir's liberal association or in Mr Aksaraylı's meetings with former class mates) are a typical feature of the well-educated middle class milieu of the Turkish "Bildungsbürger". As a BBC-funded media survey in Turkey accomplished in late 2005 suggests, the persons interviewed for this report seem to be quite representative for the BBC WS Turkish audiences who are "more likely to be male, urban" and "social opinion leaders".¹⁸

¹⁸ Quoted from an internal marketing report by the BBC. Audiences are also more likely to be over the age of 35. However such market analysis may not be as valid and representative as asserted by its authors since survey studies in Turkey are, due to the lack of a broad range of other surveys and because of high population movement confronted with difficult methodical problems.

It will remain to be seen in further research if specific aspects of the media practice cultures of these “Bildungsbürger” also pertain to the social dimension of gender, i.e. if female audiences follow different habitualised practices of tuning in to the BBC World Service.

8. References

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